

**Famous Aviators and Space Pioneers,  
and the airmail stamps issued to honor them**

**This exhibit is to highlight the 19 airmail stamps (18 designs) issued to honor famous aviators and space pioneers for their contributions over the past 94 years. During the first nine years (1918-1927) that airmail stamps were issued only pictures of planes or propellers were pictured. None of the stamps were associated with any particular individual and no portraits were on these stamps.**

**The first stamp to honor an individual was C10. This was in honor of Lindbergh's solo flight from Long Island, New York to Paris, France in May 1927. Since he was alive, only his plane was pictured on the stamp.**

**The first stamp with a portrait was C45 issued Dec 17, 1949 to honor the Wright brothers with a portrait of the brothers . This was only one year after the death of Orville Wright. This was the second of the 19 stamps issued honoring aviators.**

**There were another 17 stamps issued from 1949 to 1993 honoring the men and women who have contributed to advancements in aviation and space exploration for our country .**

## **Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) and "Spirit of St Louis"**

Lindbergh won world fame as the result of his Orteig Prize-winning solo non-stop flight on May 20–21, 1927, from Roosevelt Field located on New York's Long Island to Le Bourget Field in Paris, France. This is a distance of nearly 3,600 statute miles (5,800 km), in the single-seat, single-engine purpose built Ryan monoplane named "Spirit of St Louis". He was awarded the nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor for his historic exploit.

**This stamp (C10) issued June 18, 1927 to honor Lindbergh. Issued 28 days after flight completed.**



## **Wright Brothers (1867-1912 & 1871-1948) and their plane**

The second airmail stamp (C45) featuring aviators was issued December 17, 1949 to honor the Wright Brothers and their plane..

Wilbur and Orville Wright were American inventors and pioneers of aviation. In 1903 they achieved the first powered, sustained and controlled airplane flight; they surpassed their own milestone two years later when they built and flew the first fully practical airplane.

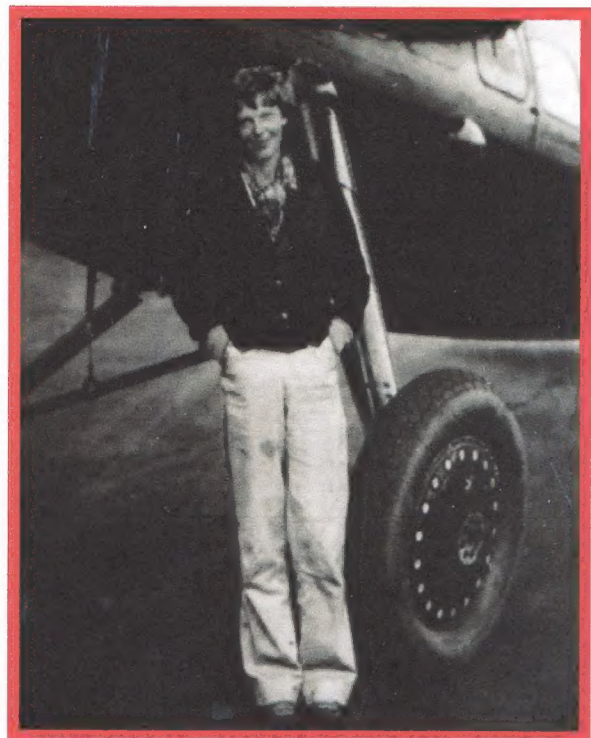




## **Amelia Earhart (1897-1937)**

Earhart became a national celebrity because of her exploits in the air. Her stature and short, tousled hair made her a perfect heroine for a media-conscious age. Her public career lasted less than a decade (from 1928 to 1937), but she used her fame to promote two causes dear to her: the advancement of commercial aviation and the advancement of women.

**The stamp issued in her honor on July 24, 1963.**



## **Robert Goddard (October 5, 1882 – August 10, 1945)**

Goddard was an American professor, physicist and inventor who is credited with creating and building the world's first liquid-fueled rocket which he successfully launched on March 16, 1926. Goddard and his team launched 34 rockets between 1926 and 1941. Goddard's work as both theorist and engineer anticipated many of the developments that make space flight possible.



**Stamp issued October 5, 1964.**



## **1978-1979 saw 3 groups of 2 stamps honoring aviators**

### **September 20, 1978 - set of 2 stamps (C91-92) honoring the Wright Brothers.**

They are the only aviators to have more than one issue in their honor. They could not get people in the US interested in their plane so Wilbur moved to France. He found a more receptive audience. He made public flights, and gave rides to officials, journalists and statesmen. The Wrights became huge celebrities there, hosted by royals and heads of state, and constantly featured in the press. The Wrights began to sell their airplanes in Europe, and then returned to the United States. The brothers became wealthy businessmen, filling contracts for airplanes in Europe and the United States.



### **March 29, 1979 - set of 2 stamps (C93-94) honoring Octave Chanute**

Octave Chanute was a brilliant and innovative railroad engineer. He designed and constructed the United States' two biggest stock yards -- Chicago Stock Yards (1865) and Kansas City Stockyards (1871). He designed and built the Hannibal Bridge which was the first bridge to cross the Missouri River in Kansas City, Missouri in 1869. After retiring from engineering in 1875, he spent 35 years working on aviation improvements and invented the "strut-wire" braced wing structure that would be used in powered biplanes of the future. He is also known for his hand glider designs.



### **March 29, 1979 - set of 2 stamps (C95-96) For Wiley Post**

**Wiley Hardeman Post** (November 22, 1898 – August 15, 1935) was a famed American aviator, the first pilot to fly solo around the world. He is known for his work in high altitude flying, Post helped develop one of the first pressure suits. On August 15, 1935, Post and American humorist Will Rogers were killed when Post's aircraft crashed on takeoff near Point Barrow, Alaska.





## **Blanche Stuart Scott (1886-1970)**



In 1910 Scott became the second woman to drive an automobile across the United States. The car named the "Lady Overland" took from May 16, 1920 to July 23, 1910.

The publicity led Glenn Curtiss to invite her to take Flying lessons. She became a professional pilot and the first woman to fly in a public exhibit doing air stunts and became known as "Tomboy in the Air". She soon retired from aviation as she felt that the public was too interested in plane crashes. In 1954 Scott began working for the United States Air Force Museum, helping to acquire early aviation materials.

**A stamp (C99) was issued in her honor on December 3, 1980**

## **Glenn Curtiss (1878-1930)**

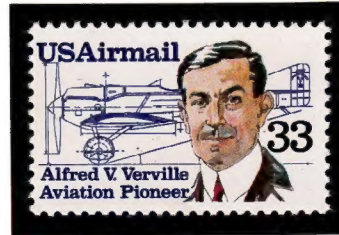


Glenn Curtiss considered the father of aviation because of all his inventions and patents for the industry. Starting with a motor he designed for the first successful dirigible. He went on to do many firsts aviation that became critical to the war efforts for our military. Naval seaplanes, flying boats, and aircraft carrier operations are all a direct result of Curtiss's influence. A final high point in Curtiss's aviation career came in 1919, when the U.S. Navy Curtiss NC-4 Flying Boat became the first aircraft to successfully cross the Atlantic Ocean.

**The stamp (C100) issued to honor him on December 3, 1980**



## **Alfred Verville (1890-1970)**



Alfred Verville spent 47 years in the early aviation industry designing many planes, engines and aviation equipment. He worked closely with Glenn Curtiss and helped design the Curtiss Jenny and the Curtiss twin engine seaplane. He designed a cantilever monoplane with retractable landing gear: the Verville-Sperry R-3, military racing airplanes, and a series of commercial cabin airplanes. He was named the "Elder Statesman of Aviation" in 1956.

**Stamp was issued in his honor on February 13, 1985**

## **Elmer (1860-1930 ) and Lawrence Sperry(1892-1923)**

Elmer Sperry is best known for his utilization of the gyroscope for the stabilization of ships, airplanes and aerial torpedoes. He also invented the gyro compass, which eliminated the variations due to the earth's magnetism. He applied the gyroscope to airplanes, with devices to give fliers artificial horizons, enabling them to fly "blind" in dense fogs. He registered over 400 patents in his lifetime many of them for-runners of devices still used today in aviation and electrical systems in our homes and cities..

Lawrence Sperry was the third son of gyrocompass inventor Elmer Sperry. Lawrence is noted for having invented the first autopilot, which he demonstrated with startling success in France in 1914. Sperry is also credited with developing the artificial horizon still used on most aircraft in the early 20th century. On 23 December 1923 Sperry took off amid fog from the United Kingdom headed for France but never reached his destination. His body was found in the English Channel on 11 January 1924.

**The stamp issued to honor them issued on February 13, 1985**



## **Samuel Langley (1834-1906)**

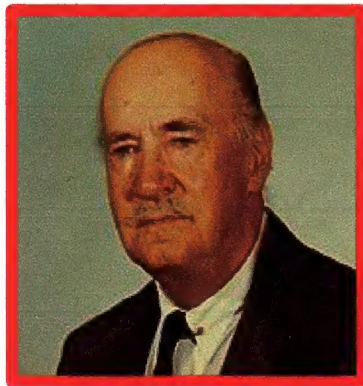
Samuel Langley was an aviation pioneer. His first work that benefited the country as a whole was time standardization. Until 1868, noon was described as to when sun was above your head. He standardized time and the different time zones and would send out telegraphs to railroads so that everyone had the correct time.

He invented the Aerodrome which flew un-piloted to *demonstrate* that machines heavier than air could be made to stay aloft. The longest flight was 5000 feet down the Potomac River. He was never able to determine how to land a plane on land as his plane was catapulted and landed on a river.

**Stamp (C118) was issued in his honor on May 14, 1988**



## **Igor Sikorsky (1889-1972 )**



Igor was a Russian American pioneer of aviation in both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. He designed and flew the world's first multi-engine fixed-wing aircraft, the Rusky Vityaz in 1913, and the first airliner, Ilya Muromets, in 1914.

After emigrating to the United States in 1919, Sikorsky founded the Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in 1923 and developed the first of Pan American Airways' ocean-conquering flying boats in the 1930s.

In 1939 Sikorsky designed and flew the Vought-Sikorsky VS-300, the first viable American helicopter, which pioneered the rotor configuration used by most helicopters today. Sikorsky would modify the design into the Sikorsky R-4, which became the world's first mass-produced helicopter in 1942.

**The stamp (C119) issued to honor him on June 23, 1988**



## **Harriett Quimby (1875-1912)**

Harriet Quimby was an early American aviator and a movie screenwriter. In 1911, she was awarded a U.S. pilot's certificate by the Aero Club of America, becoming the first woman to gain a pilot's license in the United States. In 1912, she became the first woman to fly across the English Channel. Although Quimby lived only to the age of thirty-seven, she had a major influence upon the role of women in aviation.

On July 1, 1912 in her brand-new two-seat Bleriot mono plan at a Boston air show at an altitude of 1,500 feet the aircraft unexpectedly pitched forward for reasons still unknown. Both Quimby and her passenger, Willard, were ejected from their seats and fell to their deaths, while the plane "glided down and lodged itself in the mud.

### **A Stamp (C128) was issued in her honor on April 27, 1991**



## **William Piper (1881-1970 )**

Piper was an American airplane manufacturer, and founder, eponym, and 1st president of Piper Aircraft Corporation 1929-1970. He became known as "the Henry Ford of Aviation". His small plane "The Cub" became a mainstay of pilots and amateur aviators everywhere.

In 1938, he introduced the J-3 Cub and within a decade, the bright yellow Piper Cubs were flying the skies in greater numbers than any other single airplane before or since. As WWII loomed, the Cub became the primary training aircraft for U.S. pilots, with three out of four learning to fly in them.

### **Two stamps (C129 and C132) issued honoring William Piper**

The C132 is perforated 11.2 whereas C129 is perfed 11.0

Note the slight difference in the design in that the C132 has Mr. Piper's hair touching the frame line with no space between his head and the frame.

**C129**



**C132**





## **Questions**

**What aviator had connections to the development of Kansas City?**

**What 2 female and 2 male aviators lost their life flying their planes?**

Chenute  
Earhart and Quimby  
Post & Speery